



Frequently Asked Questions from Teachers

Do you have any school programs for specific grade levels that I can reserve before I arrive with my class?

Yes! A menu of school programs organized by grade level and curriculum goals is available. We are currently taking reservations for these hands-on, interactive education programs for Fall 2005. To get a program menu or to reserve a program for your group please call (215) 597-2760.

Is there an admission fee to get into the park?

No. All park buildings are free when they are open to the public.

How many adults do we need for each student?

There is a minimum of one chaperone needed for every 8 students in the park and buildings. This ratio is for the safety of the students as well as park resources.

Where are the bus drop-offs?

The new Independence Transportation Center (ITC) located just off 5th Street at the National Constitution Center has 11 spots for loading and unloading, with an additional three spots around the corner on Race Street.

In addition to the new ITC, five additional drop-off and pick-up locations are provided throughout the historic district for motor coach groups. These locations are on the east side of Third Street, between Walnut and Chestnut Streets (in front of the former INHP Visitors Center); in front of Christ Church on Second Street, between Arch and Market Streets; in front of the Betsy Ross House on Arch Street, between Second and Third Streets; and in front of City Tavern, just North of Second and Walnut Streets; and a location for seniors and handicapped only on Fifth Street between Ranstead and Chestnut Streets.

Do I need tickets for an Independence Hall tour?

Yes. To improve the visitor experience at Independence National Historical Park, a timed and dated ticket system is now in place for tours of Independence Hall. Tickets are NOT needed to visit any of the other sites in the park, including the Liberty Bell. All visitors need a free ticket for the Independence Hall tour.

Can I schedule an Independence Hall tour before I come?

Yes. In fact, it is recommended that you reserve tickets in advance if you are planning on coming with a large group. Visitors can reserve tickets as early as twelve months before their visit through the Spherix reservation system. Call 1-800-967-2283 from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. daily (Eastern Time). You may also go to the web site: <http://reservations.nps.gov> to reserve tickets. The tickets are free, but there is a \$1.50 per ticket handling fee when reserved in advance. Tickets are available from the ticket counter at the Independence Visitor Center on a first come, first served basis if you do not have reservations.

During the months of January and February, no tickets are needed for Independence Hall tours. This is an ideal time for school groups to visit.

Can I get my tickets mailed to me before the trip?

No. If you make ticket reservations you will need to pick them up from the ticket counter at the Independence Visitor Center no later than 45 minutes before the scheduled tour time.

How long does the tour take?

The tour of Independence Hall is approximately 30 minutes. There are no restrooms available while you are on your tour.

How should I prepare my group to go through security?

In order to enter the Liberty Bell Center and the sites on Independence Square, you will need to take your chaperones and students through the security screening facility that is located on Market Street between Fifth and Sixth Streets. The screening facility opens at 8:30 a.m. daily. The last visitors will be screened at 4:45 p.m.

Be prepared to open or remove any coats, jackets or hats you may be wearing. Place all keys, change, and cell phones into your bags or jacket pockets. Bags and jackets will be placed on a belt and will pass through the x-ray machine. Each person will walk through the metal detector. Special accommodations are made for persons with medical concerns. **Weapons including pocket knives and laser pointers are not allowed through security.** Backpacks, suitcases, and other containers larger than a standard airline carry-on must be searched by hand. You can help your group to move through security in a timely manner by limiting the size and number of items brought into the park. Open containers of food and drink are not permitted inside or past the security point.

Please arrive at the security line between 45 minutes and one hour prior to the time printed on your Independence Hall tour ticket.

Are there restrooms within the park?

There are several restroom facilities within the park. They are located at the Independence Visitor Center, the Underground Museum, Franklin Courtyard, the Military Museum, and the corner of 5th and Chestnut Streets. **There are no restrooms within the secure area including the Liberty Bell Center and Independence Square!** Please plan for this and have your students and chaperones use the restrooms before entering the secure area.

Will my school have a tour guide while they are in the park?

The Independence Hall tour is the only part of your day that will be guided. The rest of the park is completely self-guided although there are rangers in every building to answer any questions your group may have.

What resources are available to help me lead my group around the park?

We currently have drop-in packets for teachers and chaperones available at the Independence Visitor Center desk, and online at our web site. These packets provide a self-guided, thematic walking tour of park sites for teachers and parents to use with student groups.

The first packet is about Benjamin Franklin, and is called "Following in Franklin's Footsteps".

What kind of behavior is expected when my students are visiting the park?

Teachers and chaperones are responsible for ensuring that students are supervised and well-behaved at all times. A minimum of one chaperone for every eight students is required. Students are to be instructed not to talk during the ranger presentations except to ask or answer questions. There are frequently large crowds visiting these sites and good listening skills are essential so that everyone can enjoy learning about Independence National Historical Park.

What time of year is best to bring my students to the park?

Whenever possible, try to arrange your visit to the park during the months of September through March. The park has fewer visitors during these months, and the absence of crowds will make your visit more enjoyable and more educational. Weekdays (especially Fridays) in April, May and early June from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. are traditionally times of the heaviest visitation by school groups. Consider scheduling your class visit for other seasons to avoid the crowds. During January and February, visitation decreases dramatically and your class will be able to experience the park's resources more fully while receiving individualized attention from park staff.

Are there lunch facilities or somewhere to eat if we bring bag lunches?

There are numerous dining establishments located adjacent to the park. The Bourse has a food court and is located on 5th Street between Market and Chestnut Streets. There is also a food court in the Gallery Mall which is at 10th and Market Streets. The National Constitution Center has a cafeteria available for school groups who visit the NCC. Picnicking is permitted in the park, provided that care is taken to discard trash in the receptacles provided. Please remember that open containers of food and drink are not permitted in any of the park buildings.

Is there somewhere to buy souvenirs?

There are several museum stores in the park in which to buy souvenirs, books, teacher materials, and films:

The Independence Visitor Center Museum Shop

This store has the largest selection of books and objects relating to 18th century America and the American Revolution. Located in the Independence Visitor Center at Sixth and Market Streets.

America's National Parks Museum Shop

This store carries items from National Park Service sites across the United States. Located on Chestnut Street, between Third and Fourth Streets.

Franklin Court Museum Shop

This store carries items related to Benjamin Franklin. Located at 314 Market Street.

The Franklin Court Printing Office

This site has items for sale that were printed on the reproduction printing press. Located at 320 Market Street.

Do you have a web site with more information?

Yes! We invite you to visit our web site at: www.nps.gov/inde. Click on "Education Programs" for the latest information.

